



HOME OFFICE

Second Report of the Committee
of the Police Council on Higher
Police Training
(Senior Staff Course)



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*In the place of Mr. B. N. Bebbington, O.B.E., who was originally appointed to the Committee.

**SECOND REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE POLICE COUNCIL
APPOINTED TO EXAMINE AND REPORT UPON PROPOSALS
FOR CERTAIN CHANGES IN THE PROVISION FOR HIGHER
TRAINING AT THE POLICE COLLEGE**

(Senior Staff Course)

To the Rt. Hon. Henry Brooke, M.P.,
Secretary of State for the Home Department.

SIR,

We were appointed, as a Committee of the Police Council, by Warrant of 20th July, 1961, to examine and report upon higher police training, other than the matters such as the accommodation at the Police College and the content of the training for which the College authorities are responsible, upon the assumptions approved by the Police Council on 28th June, 1961. The aspects of higher training which we were asked to examine are summarised in the White Paper on Police Training in England and Wales (Cmnd. 1450) which was presented to Parliament in August, 1961. Our first report on the special course for constables was presented on 19th December, 1961.

2. We have now turned to the arrangements for the senior staff course contemplated in the White Paper. In paragraph 11 of that Paper it is stated that :

"Thirdly, there will be a senior staff course, of a primarily professional character, designed to equip officers of the rank of inspector or above for the highest posts in the service. This also will be of six months' duration. This is also a new development ; and when this course comes into existence, the existing senior course for inspectors and chief inspectors and the short courses for superintendents will be discontinued."

3. We now have the honour of submitting our second Report which sets out proposals for mounting a senior staff course at the Police College.

The object of the course

4. It is necessary to define precisely the object of the course since this will govern its content and must affect the rank of students who will be admitted to it. The White Paper (Cmnd. 1450) refers to a course "designed to equip officers of the rank of inspector or above for the highest posts in the service". In the informal discussions on higher training preceding the White Paper the new staff course was envisaged as involving "very advanced studies in the duties attaching to chief officers. The officers taking part must study not only the basic operational duties of the chief officer but must also be equipped to play a full part in the service generally, for example, to make useful contributions to its consultative and advisory organs, which would involve a full understanding of the true nature of the British police service and its relationship to Government, central and local." This seems to us to provide a good definition of the object of the course and a starting point for a further detailed examination.

The size of the senior staff course

5. The size of the senior staff course must bear some relationship to the number of posts of chief constable, assistant chief constable and deputy chief constable becoming vacant each year and this is necessarily small: the average over the last few years, including comparable ranks in the Metropolitan Police, is about 20. It is, of course, not possible to forecast what effect the recommendations of the Royal Commission in its final report or other factors will have on the number of senior posts in the service which will fall vacant each year; but for the present purpose, an assumption that the average will remain of the order of 20 seems reasonable. We understand that the Police College could take between 40-48 students each year, in two courses, in its existing accommodation. This seems about right, for no system of selection for the new course could be sufficiently accurate to ensure that all those selected would prove to be the most suitable for the highest ranks; and the experience gained by attending the course will be of great value to every officer selected for it. His greater personal efficiency and contribution to the service should more than repay the cost of sending him on it.

6. Further, we think that allowance should be made within the total number of students admitted each year for students from the Scottish police service, and possibly other police services outside England and Wales without facilities to run a similar course, which might wish to take part. It will be for the selection authority to determine the number of students from such forces to be admitted each year. In general, however, we think that 20 places on each course should normally be reserved for students from England, Wales and Scotland; and any remaining places that could be made available—and these are not likely to exceed four on any particular course—might be allocated to students from other police forces. It would be for the selection authority to determine what requirements would have to be fulfilled before students from "outside" forces could be accepted.

The rank of students on the course

7. In the light of these considerations, we have given careful thought to the question of the rank of the students who should be given the opportunity of applying for vacancies in the new course. Officers below the rank of superintendent are not normally considered for posts as chief constable and assistant chief constable and it is the view of the representatives of the Superintendents' Association that, in the initial stages at least, selection should be restricted to the ranks of chief inspector and above. The majority of the Committee think, however, that there are good grounds for not recommending any modification of the proposal in the White Paper that the course should be open to officers of the rank of "inspector or above". There is, in our view, a great potential of leadership, not only among superintendents, but also among inspectors and chief inspectors and it is essential that it should be exploited to the full in the interests of the service. Officers of outstanding ability in the ranks of chief inspector and inspector especially in the smaller forces where they may see little prospect of early promotion in the ordinary course, need the incentive which the possibility of selection for the senior staff course would give. Clearly, if an officer is to be chosen to attend the course he must have had the opportunity of displaying the qualities required and of showing his potential for the highest posts. We think, therefore, that officers of the rank of inspector should have held the substantive rank of inspector for at least two years before becoming eligible to apply. Subject to this limitation as regards candidates holding

the rank of inspector, we consider that the function of the selection authority should be to select the best candidates in the light of their potential for the highest office, and to this extent they should disregard the rank of the candidate.

8. This does not mean that in our view an inspector who is selected for, and who completes the course successfully should in the ordinary way be regarded as suitable for immediate promotion to the higher ranks. His selection will show that he has demonstrated to the selection authorities that he possesses the personal qualities of mind and character required for the highest posts; the training he will then receive in the duties attaching to chief officers should make him better qualified for the highest posts. Police authorities will no doubt wish to give due weight to the fact that an officer has successfully completed the course, but we do not wish to suggest that attendance at the course should be regarded as a substitute for experience in the senior ranks of the service. Clearly, a balance must be struck; and if a relatively junior officer, possibly in the rank of inspector, is selected for the course because of his outstanding qualities, it will still be desirable for him to gain experience by serving in intervening ranks after the completion of the course before promotion to the highest ranks. If the scheme is to be successful, however, it is to be hoped that such comparatively junior officers will be given early opportunities to show that they are capable of fulfilling more responsible duties as chief inspector or superintendent; and they will then be in the field for further promotion (see paragraph 21).

Age of students on the course

9. We have considered whether any rule should be laid down about the age at which candidates might be admitted to the course. Officers holding the rank of assistant chief constable and chief constable can retire, having qualified for an ordinary pension, on or after the age of 60; they are compulsorily retired at the age of 65, although there is provision for postponement for a further 5 years in suitable cases. In these circumstances, it might not be reasonable to exclude from the course officers who have reached the age of 50 years and above since, providing they receive early promotion, they will still have a considerable time to serve in the highest ranks. But clearly it would be better if the majority of the candidates were younger since younger officers are likely to benefit most from the course.

10. We have considered this problem in relation to the present average age of officers holding various ranks. The table in Appendix I shows that there has been some slight reduction in the ages of officers promoted during the years 1959-61 as compared with the period 1955-59. Nevertheless, a large number of promotions to the ranks of inspector, chief inspector and superintendent occur when an officer is between 40 and 50, and officers within that age range are likely to constitute the majority of those attending the course in the initial stages. It would seem wrong, however, to exclude officers of the age of 50 and above who qualify for selection, and we do not think it is possible to lay down any hard and fast rule about the age at which candidates might be admitted to the course; the most that can be done is to leave it to the selection machinery to keep the age down.

Selection procedure

11. In considering the nature of the selection machinery required for the senior staff course, we have been impressed by the difficulties which will arise because of the number of officers who will immediately come within the field of selection if our proposals are accepted. It must be borne in mind that if only officers of the rank of superintendent and above were considered,

the number of candidates would be many less than the establishment of 901 since some superintendents and chief superintendents in post are nearing retirement and others might not wish to be considered for the course. There is an establishment of 917 chief inspectors and 3,353 inspectors but, as with superintendents, some would be near retirement age, and others, by reason of promotion within the previous two years might be ineligible, or might not wish to apply. Nevertheless, if, as we propose, officers of the rank of inspector and above (subject to the qualification of two years' service in the substantive rank of inspector) are allowed to apply for admission to the course, the field of selection would be very wide and it is necessary to consider with care the selection machinery required. The task of selection will be formidable.

12. We have considered whether a satisfactory first step in the selection procedure would be to provide for a written qualifying examination. There are no existing examinations of which use could be made at the present time; but, more important than this, it does not seem to us that a written examination, however carefully designed, is an appropriate method in view of the seniority of the officers concerned, and the probable variety of their ranks and ages. We are advised that it would be technically possible to draw up a short written qualifying test which did not depend on academic proficiency, and we recognise that if other methods do not prove satisfactory as a means of sorting out the applications in the initial stages it may be necessary to reconsider this provisional view. But we do not think that a written examination should be introduced now, subject to review in the light of experience.

13. We think that a system of selection by extended interview should form the final stage. We are advised by the Civil Service Commission that experience has shown that the extended interview procedure can successfully be applied to senior officers of the type who would be within the field for selection for the senior staff course. The numbers likely to be involved, however, make it necessary for a great deal of sifting to take place before this stage is reached.

14. We suggest that the selection procedure should be on the following lines :—

- (i) Any officer of the rank of inspector (subject to two years service in the substantive rank) or above should be free to make an application for admission to the course if he is qualified and so wishes. (Paragraph 7.)
- (ii) His application should go forward together with a full report from his chief constable. Whether or not a candidate is recommended by his chief constable, the application should be considered by a District Committee. This Committee should be composed of one of H.M. Inspectors of Constabulary as chairman, with two chief constables. The District Committee, so constituted, would probably decide to make an initial selection for interview on the basis of written applications and comments. In view of the large number of applicants, it would be helpful to District Committees if each district could be given a quota,* based on police establishment, of candidates who might be put forward for consideration for each senior staff course. The function of the District Committee should then be to weed out obviously unsuitable applications, and

* The figures in Appendix II show how this might work.

to defer other applications where, in their view, the candidate, although showing suitable qualities for the highest ranks in the service, was not yet ready for attendance at the course. It is proposed that there should initially be two senior staff courses a year and in time a considerable number of officers will be able to attend the course. It will, therefore, be for the selection machinery to take into account the need for phasing of admission to the course in the interest of the individuals and of the service; they may have to decide that an application from a suitable officer should not be accepted immediately since his claims are less pressing than those of other officers. If applications have to be deferred in this way, arrangements will have to be made to ensure that they are revived at a suitable time in the future. The District Committees will have to balance the interests of outstanding junior officers and those of more senior officers also within the field. The object should be to provide the service with a flow of officers who show the right potential for the highest posts. The selection authority (see paragraph 15 below) will no doubt prescribe the form of the application to be made; but we recommend that the form should give the applicant an opportunity to set out any qualifications to which he might wish to draw attention. The District Committees will need to have before them a full account of the applicant's experience and career, together with copies of the confidential reports made on him (including the College report if—as is likely—he has attended a course there).

- (iii) The figures in the appendix show that at any rate in the initial stage a further process of selection is likely to be required before the final stage is reached. This should take the form of selection by a Central Selection Board which should include a non-police member with experience in selection techniques. District Committees should put forward an appropriate number of candidates for extended interview with a general assessment on each. The Board, which would be able to ensure a common standard over the country as a whole, would normally call the officers for interview in cases of doubt. At this stage candidates would be selected entirely on their merits and there should be no question of providing a prescribed quota of successful candidates from each district. It will be for decision how many candidates should be sent for extended interview; but in view of the likely strain on the facilities available, we suggest a figure of 100 each year as a basis for planning. The Central Selection Board should also have discretion to defer applications for later consideration and in these cases the District Committees would be informed.
- (iv) On the basis of the extended interviews, the candidates for the courses to be held in the ensuing period of twelve months would be chosen.

15. The Police Promotion Examinations Board already supervises the work of the centralised promotion examination system, and has agreed to act as the selection authority for the special course. In view of its composition and its experience in this field we consider that it would be a proper body to supervise the selection procedure for the senior staff course, to decide matters of administrative detail arising from time to time and to select the members of the Central Selection Board and of the District Committees.

Tests during the course

16. The senior staff course will be one of advanced studies, but we do not think that it would be appropriate for there to be examinations during, or at the end of, it. Clearly, there would be a practical difficulty in setting examinations at the end of the course which would be fair to all students in view of the variety of their ages and ranks. But apart from this, we do not think that it would be suitable to sit examinations at the end of the type of course which we envisage or that the results of such examinations would have any real meaning. The course will comprise students of various ranks, all of whom will in different ways already have proved their merit and who will in particular have come successfully through a searching process of selection. The object of the course will be not to provide them with a corpus of knowledge on which they can be tested but to give them further training which will improve their ability to serve successfully in the highest ranks of the services. Nevertheless, we think that it would be wrong to take no account of the qualities shown by the student during the course, and we recommend that the Commandant of the Police College should make a confidential report on each student to his chief constable.

Deferments

17. Some students may have to return to their own force without completing the course for domestic or other reasons. In suitable cases, we consider that a place should be found for such an officer on a later course. This would be a matter for the selection authority.

Duration and number of courses

18. The White Paper (Cmd. 1450) suggests that the course should be of six months' duration. This seems to us to be about right for a course of this nature. It is necessary to bear in mind that the students on the course will be officers holding senior and responsible posts in the service, and it would be difficult for them to leave their posts for any longer period. At the same time, we recommend that if the course is to be as long as six months generous leave arrangements should be made.

Participation of Metropolitan Police

19. We assume that the Metropolitan Police will take part in the senior staff course and indeed we regard it as essential that they should do so. In the same way as a quota based on police establishment would be provided for each District Committee, a quota should be determined for the Metropolitan Police. The Central Selection Board would then consider Metropolitan candidates at the same time as candidates recommended by the District Committees. At this stage the object would be merely to select the best candidates to go forward for extended interview, and the Metropolitan candidate should be considered in exactly the same way as any other candidate. The final selection of students would be on merit and there should be no allocation of a set number of places to the Metropolitan police.

Transfers between forces

20. It is our hope that the senior staff course will provide a reservoir of officers with both training and experience fitting them for the highest posts in the service. Opportunities for advancement, however, vary from force to force, and even if eventual promotion is assured, it may come too long after the successful completion of the senior staff course for the course to have its full effect. This raises a number of questions such

as the age at which police officers retire, or are compulsorily retired, from the force. Such questions are outside the scope of our inquiry; but we wish to draw attention to the urgent need for facilitating transfer between forces, to which reference is made in paragraph 318 of the final report of the Royal Commission on the Police. The working of the scheme will necessarily have to be reviewed from time to time; but in the meantime we recommend that, once a supply of officers who have successfully completed the senior staff course becomes available, promotion authorities should arrange for the advertising of vacancies in posts of chief inspector and above. As a general guide we suggest that all vacancies in the posts of assistant chief constable, deputy chief constable and chief constable should be advertised and that in due course not less than one vacancy in three for other posts down to and including chief inspector should be advertised and applications invited from the service as a whole. We do not suggest that officers who have been through the senior staff course will automatically have preference over those who have not done so—although in the long term attendance at the course may come to be regarded as an essential qualification for the highest posts, but selection for and successful completion of the course will in any case clearly count in an officer's favour, together with other factors to be taken into account such as his breadth of experience, his record of service and the successful performance of the duties of the ranks in which he has served.

Training for Inspectors

21. If our proposals are accepted, then inspectors of outstanding ability will be admitted to the senior staff course. But because of the limited number of students which can be admitted to the senior staff course, the great majority of inspectors will necessarily have no opportunity to attend the course. Now that the "B" course at the Police College has been discontinued, no suitable higher training facilities exist for officers at this stage in their career. The question of the training required to equip inspectors for promotion to ranks below that of assistant chief constable seems to us to be important, and the gap that undoubtedly exists in the carefully co-ordinated scheme for police training cannot effectively be filled by short courses arranged by Districts, however useful these may be for refresher purposes. This is outside the scope of our present inquiry but we recommend that it should be given further examination at an early date.

Experimental nature of course

22. In conclusion, we should like to stress the experimental nature of this course. The senior staff course will be a new development in the service: and it is essential that arrangements should be made to review the working both of the selection arrangements and of the course as experience is gained.

Summary of recommendations

23. (i) The object of the course, as envisaged by the White Paper (Cmd. 1450), should be "to equip officers of the rank of inspector or above for the highest posts in the service." (Paragraph 4.)

(ii) The size of the course should bear some relationship to the number of senior posts falling vacant each year. On the assumptions that about 20 posts fall vacant each year and that not more than half of the officers selected for the course eventually attain the highest ranks, a yearly intake into the Police College of 40-48 students seems about right. (Paragraph 5.)

(iii) The selection authority should make allowance each year, within a maximum intake of 48 students, for students from Scottish and other police forces outside England and Wales. (Paragraph 6.)

(iv) The course should be open to officers of the rank of inspector and above. Officers holding the rank of inspector should, however, have held the substantive rank of inspector for two years before becoming eligible to apply. The function of the selection authority should be to select students from the best candidates who apply irrespective of rank. (Paragraphs 7 and 14.)

(v) No rule should be laid down about the age at which candidates might be admitted to the course but the selection authorities should try to keep the average age down. (Paragraphs 9 and 10.)

(vi) A written examination should not be used as a means of preliminary selection. (Paragraph 12.)

(vii) Any officer who is eligible should be free to apply for the course ; his application, which should be framed to provide an opportunity for the candidate to draw attention to any qualification he may have, should go forward, together with a full report from his chief constable. The applications should be considered by a District Committee whether or not the candidate is recommended by his chief constable. (Paragraph 14.)

(viii) A District Committee should be composed of one of H.M. Inspectors of Constabulary as chairman, with two chief constables. Each district should be given a quota, based on police establishment and the function of the District Committee would be to select the most suitable candidates, deferring cases as necessary. (Paragraph 14.)

(ix) The District Committees should put forward the appropriate number of candidates, together with a detailed assessment on each, to a Central Selection Board. At this stage candidates should be selected on merits and there should not be a prescribed quota of successful candidates from each district. The function of the Central Selection Board, which should include a non-police member with experience in selection techniques, should be to select those candidates who should go forward for extended interview. (Paragraph 14.)

(x) The Police Promotion Examinations Board would be a proper body to supervise the selection procedure, to decide matters of administrative detail and to select the members of the Central Selection Board and of the District Committees. (Paragraph 15.)

(xi) It would not be appropriate to hold tests during, or at the end of, the course but the Commandant of the Police College should make a confidential report on each student to his chief constable. (Paragraph 16.)

(xii) There should be provision for a student who has to retire from a course to do so. The selection authority should be able to provide the student with a place on a subsequent course in suitable cases. (Paragraph 17.)

(xiii) The course should be of six months' duration. (Paragraph 18.)

(xiv) It is essential that the Metropolitan Police should take part in the course. A quota, based on police establishment, should be provided for the Metropolitan Police as for the police districts ; but Metropolitan candidates recommended to the Central Selection Board should be considered at the same time and in the same way as other candidates ; and no fixed quota of vacancies in the course should be made available for them. (Paragraph 19.)

(xv) To ensure that the officers trained on the senior staff course find avenues for promotion, transfers between forces should be facilitated, even if there are immediate vacancies in their own forces. As a supply of officers who have completed the senior staff course becomes available, all vacancies in the posts of assistant chief constable, deputy chief constable

and chief constable should be advertised ; and not less than one vacancy in three should be advertised of other posts down to, and including, chief inspector. (Paragraph 20.)

(xvi) Further consideration should be given to the higher training facilities required to equip inspectors for ranks below that of assistant chief constable. (Paragraph 21.)

(xvii) Arrangements should be made to review the working of the course (including the selection arrangements) as experience is gained. (Paragraph 22.)

We have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient Servants,

(Signed)

K. A. L. Parker.
P. Biggs.
S. G. Church.
A. C. Evans.
S. Hand.
S. Hodgson,
J. Hoy.
W. Johnson.
B. G. Lampard-Vachell.
D. A. C. Morrison.
H. R. Neate.
J. Simpson.
F. T. Tarry.
C. White.
R. P. Wilson.
A. E. Young.

D. J. Trevelyan (*Secretary*).
Home Office,
Whitehall, S.W.1.
17th January, 1963.

APPENDIX 1
Ages of officers promoted during the period 1955-1961

Ranks		35 and under	36-40	41-45	46-49	50 and over	Total	Average number of promotions yearly
Provincial	To Inspector							
	1955-59 ...	126	536	878	292	40	1,872	375
	1960-61 ...	91	192	285	118	16	702	351
	Total ...	217	728	1,163	410	56	2,574	367
Metropolitan	To Inspector							
	1955-59 ...	123	140	210	80		553	111
	1960-61 ...	83	41	67	18	—	209	104
	Total ...	206	181	277	98		762	109
Provincial	To Chief Inspector							
	1955-59 ...	6	66	322	312		706	141
	1960-61 ...	5	23	136	107	28	299	149
	Total ...	11	89	458	447		1,005	144
Metropolitan	To Chief Inspector							
	1955-59 ...	1	229	89	135		247	49
	1960-61 ...	6	7	41	28	4	86	43
	Total ...	7	29	130	167		333	48
Provincial	To Superintendent							
	1955-59 ...	4	23	132	174	94	427	85
	1960-61 ...	1	6	64	68	35	174	87
	Total ...	5	29	196	242	129	601	86
Metropolitan	To Superintendent							
	1955-59 ...	—	9	33	73	38	153	31
	1960-61 ...	—	3	20	30	17	70	35
	Total ...	—	12	53	103	55	223	32

APPENDIX II Police Districts

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Metropolitan Police	Totals
Authorised establishment of:										
(i) Inspector	518	242	375	412	352	329	233	195	697	3,353
(ii) Chief Inspector	177	71	126	101	81	89	52	41	179	917
(iii) Superintendent	70	57	77	88	70	71	57	58	185	733
(iv) Chief Superintendent	44	5	17	13	13	15	10	3	48	168
(v) Total officers eligible:	809	375	595	614	516	504	352	297	1,109	5,171
(vi) Total authorised estab.	12,500	5,600	9,400	8,700	7,500	7,300	5,300	4,300	20,700	81,300
(vii) Quota from each district based on (vi)	30	13	23	22	18	18	13	11	50	198
(viii) Quota in round figures	30	10-15	20-25	20-25	15-20	15-20	10-15	10-15	50	180-215

180-215 From District Selection Boards

Central Selection Board

Note: (i) No. 5 District includes City of London.

(2) The figures for Inspector make no allowance for the two year service requirement.

Extended Interview

40 Annual total for Staff Course.

